



MINUTES
JOINT CITY COUNCIL / PARK BOARD WORK SESSION
August 24, 2020

Meeting Location

Nelson Lakeside Park

Present:

City Council Members: Charlie Miner (Mayor), Michelle Jerde, and Deirdre Kvale; Park Board Members: Donny Chillstrom (Chair), Alicia Larson, Suzanne Caswell, Gina Joyce, and Thomas Joyce

Others Present:

Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; City Administrator: Scott Weske; Marty Schneider (Long Lake Chamber of Commerce), John James (President, Long Lake Chamber of Commerce), David Cotter (Orono Lions Club), Barry Petit, and Judd Axelson (Resident)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

Approve Agenda

A motion was made by Council member Jerde, seconded by Park Board member Chillstrom, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

Discuss Multi-Event Stage Concept/Proposal for Nelson Lakeside Park

Resident Marty Schneider presented on behalf of the Orono Lions Club and Long Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, introducing a proposal to bring a small stage to Nelson Lakeside Park. The idea of an event stage has been discussed over the last 20 years. Parking, size, and use all factored into this collective discussion. John James, President of Chamber of Commerce.

The intent of the proposal would be to enhance the park area, while respecting local residents, the community and the City.

The concept had been brought up to the City Council at a meeting a week ago Tuesday. The intent of the joint work session is to be exploratory in nature. In approaching the concept of the event stage, the volunteer groups had consulted with architect Barry Petit who had created the Long Lake Village Design Guidelines. The proposed stage design ties into the City's design guidelines and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The group indicated they see the event stage as a stimulus to bring events like Theatre in the Park, similar to Wayzata's events in the evenings. The stage could serve as a possible future host of Theatre in the Park, yoga, etc. The Orono Lions Club and Chamber of Commerce wanted to put forward a multi-use events stage while being respectful of low volume and low impact.

The City itself controls the use of the park in entirety. When someone wants to come in to use the stage, whether it's Buckhorn Days, Gear West, etc., there are a lot of checks and balances that would control how the event stage would be used. City permitting would control when an event is, timing, anything related to sound, etc.

Regarding parking, today there are 40 dedicated parking spots. If there were to be larger event, would there be ample parking? Just in case, the group reached out to Brian Peters at Lake Community Bank who confirmed that

any time an event would be held, on a case by case basis the bank would be open to helping out and allowing use of their lot for overflow parking. John Patch had also offered use of parking at his location. The group chose this particular site to be the least intrusive. The stage should be like the picnic pavilion - maintenance free.

The group feels that they largely can raise project funding privately. The stage would become the property of the City. The group believes fundraising will cover construction costs. It is hoped to get electricity to the stage and that the City might help with site coordination. Fundraising is something the group has always done fairly successfully. Lots of local business have already offered to contribute.

From a timeline perspective, the group's goal is to speak with the Council in September/October, aiming to get approval over the winter. A potential unveiling could possibly be by Buckhorn Days 2021. The group plans on taking time, looking for input; and working cooperatively with the City, residents, and other stakeholders.

Council member Jerde questioned the cost of the project.

Mr. Schneider replied that the cost had not been finalized yet, but the group should be able to fundraise for it. They can also do a nice job landscaping around the structure to provide buffer, and they can't imagine the project to be too high-impact.

Based on today's meeting, Mr. Schneider stated they would come to the Council with a more formal proposal, formalized design. Maintenance has not been hammered out yet, but the intent is that the stage won't take more maintenance than the picnic pavilion.

Council member Jerde stated she thought the location along the tree line was great, and voiced support for the idea.

Administrator Weske noted that over the last 20 years, there had been discussion at times of bathroom facilities. He noted there could possibly be an apron area for the addition of restrooms.

Park Board Chair Chillstrom indicated that the park would provide an excellent spot for a stage.

Mr. Schneider advised that the footprint for the stage proposal is less than 500 square feet. The typical stage is 20'x20', and the proposed size would allow for a bit for equipment but remain within the context of the site.

Chair Chillstrom mentioned discussion of permanent restrooms.

Mr. Schneider clarified that the idea is the stage first, and it would be an additional thing to add on for amenities as needed. He noted that if you go down to Wayzata, bathroom placement is very important. You look out from McCormick's and see a large cinderblock building. It's quite assaulting. Bathrooms being a bit separate from the stage might make sense.

Resident Judd Axelson indicated that Buckhorn Days can get pretty loud. As a nearby resident, it's just fine one day a year. If it's a series of events, that could be difficult. He voiced some concern with regard to noise during the evening, an example is Buckhorn Days. Would there be constraints put in place to ensure that "minimal impact, minimal usage" is kept?

Mr. Schneider responded that every event that would occur at the stage would need to be signed off by the City Council. Event applicants would have to work collectively with City staff to ensure low impact, low volume.

Mayor Charlie Miner mentioned that the Park Board may want to consider investigating the feasibility and location of permanent public restrooms as a part of this project, depending on funding availability.

Adjourn:

Hearing no objection, Mayor Charlie Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Joyce, Park Board Secretary